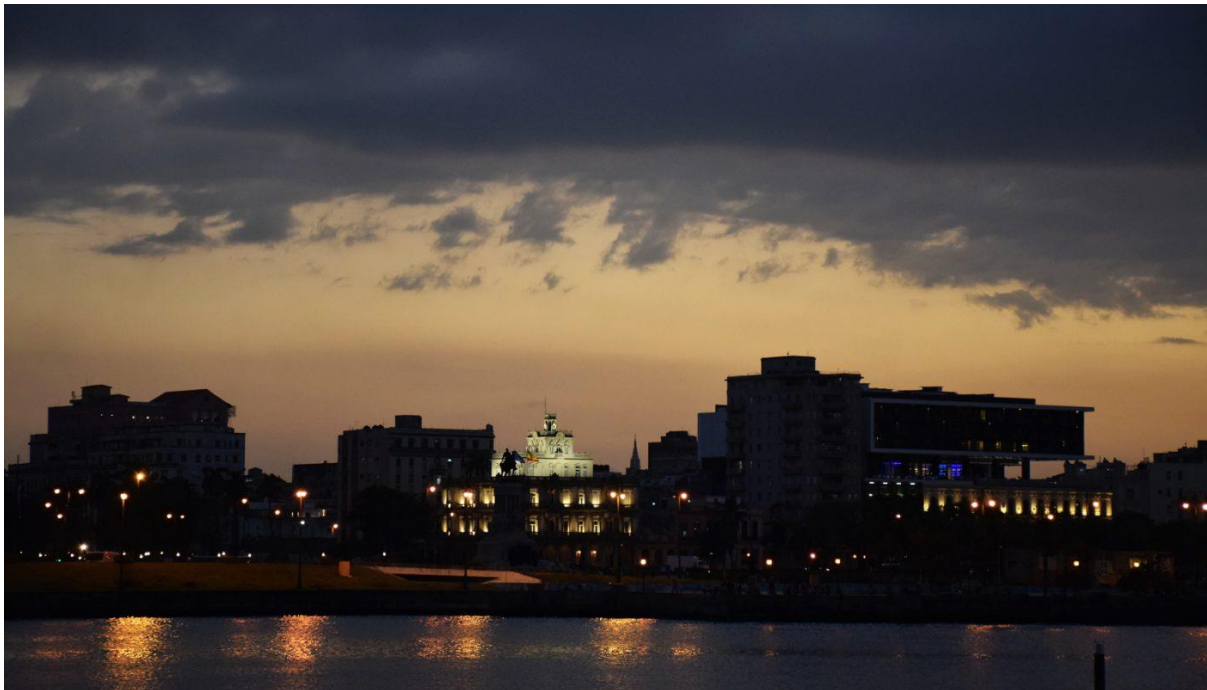


Deficit reaches almost 1600 megawatts: Cuba's power grid in the red



Symbolic picture: a sunset in Havana (source: [VV Nincic/Flickr/CC BY 2.0](#))

The energy situation in Cuba has worsened again in recent days. After the power grid was restored last Tuesday and a few days with only a three-digit deficit, the bottlenecks increased to 1590 megawatts on Thursday evening, as the electricity supplier UNE [announced](#). This means that only just under half of the demand can be met, similar to the situation immediately before the [blackout on 18 October](#).

As the report also shows, nine of the 20 power plant blocks are currently out of operation, two more than before the blackout. Six of them are due to damage and three are as a result of planned maintenance work. [After a power plant block in Mariel failed on Sunday](#), the deficit once again reached four-digit values.

The energy-saving plan adopted on 17 October, according to which all non-essential activities are to be suspended, did not come into force after the grid was restored. Nightclubs and other large consumers have remained [open as usual](#). However, the high deficit means that daily power outages will continue for 12 hours or more, exceeding the planned shutdown cycles. In addition, frequent voltage fluctuations are reported that can damage electrical appliances. The situation is particularly tense in the centre and east of the country.

In the evening, Cuba's Energy Minister Vicente de la O'Levy gave [an interview to the Canal Caribe TV station](#). He reported that Felton in Santiago (which is currently being serviced) and the Céspedes in Cienfuegos, two of the most important power plants, are currently out of action. 'The grid is damaged,' said O'Levy. Nevertheless, the situation is different from what it was immediately before the blackout. 'The current message on social media is that the power grid will collapse again. We are officially saying at this point: the conditions for this are not in place,' said the minister. There is more fuel available today and therefore

opportunities for decentralised generation using floating power plants and diesel generators. The necessary fuel is currently being redistributed to enable these to be switched on. 'On Saturday and Sunday we will see a slight improvement in the current situation,' O'Levy assured.

As the AP news agency [reports](#), the first oil deliveries from Mexico have now arrived, which President Claudia Sheinbaum had announced in support of the blackout and Hurricane Oscar. Accordingly, 412,000 barrels of crude oil arrived at the port of Cienfuegos on Thursday. On Wednesday evening, a further 67,000 barrels, apparently diesel, were shipped; they are expected to arrive in Santiago de Cuba at the beginning of next week.

'Mexico is now crucial because Venezuela has cut its supplies to Cuba and Russian oil is nowhere to be seen,' said Jorge Piñon, a senior scientist at the University of Texas at Austin Energy Center, which tracks deliveries.



Díaz-Canel at a solar park under construction in Cienfuegos (source: [Cubadebate](#))

Meanwhile, President Miguel Díaz-Canel visited several provinces during the week, including Guantánamo, where the death toll from Hurricane Oscar has now [risen to](#) eight. During the visits, Cuba's media focused on new solar parks that are being built in many places. Cuba plans to install 2,000 megawatts of solar power in the next two years. However, it will take some time before the results are felt: for example, four parks are to be built [in Bayamo](#), which could cover 80 per cent of the electricity needs of the province of Granma. The first of the planned parks, with a capacity of 21.8 megawatts, is not expected to be inaugurated until April 2025. Cuba's energy crisis will probably remain a race against time. ([Cubaheute](#))